

9/11 Commission files

Team 8/ Box 6

FAA HQ Col. S Atkins

Scanned by Mike Williams of 911myths.com on 2 June 2009

4/6/04 Interview with Col. Sheryl Atkins

- Matt Duffin HQ - Air Force - J.G.
- M.K.
- K.S.
- G. Brown

Interview # 1
on 4/6/04

- Joined Air Force right out of College.
- She's on ATC by trade.
↳ Controller
- 8/3/00 - joined FAA HQ as
a Liaison.
- 9/11/01 - she was the Cmdr. of
Detachment two of Air Force.
Liaisons to FAA and others.
- Any Air Force people w/ questions
could call Detachment 2 - AF and
get answers.
- She and her group were attached
to FAA AAT (Peacock / Duffin).
- They are part of a drop-in unit.

- She reports to the Air Force - her boss at the Pentagon.
- The CARF would be another potential customer to her and the A.F. Detachment 2.
- Air Traffic Service Cell - Lt. Col. Cherry - she has the same boss as Atkins. - ^{Atkins and Cherry's boss.}
- Mr. Plonzer - Associate Director for Civil Air Force on 9/11/01. (He is at Boeing now).
↳ V.P. of Air Traffic

Day of 9-11-01

- Her office was on 4th Fl.
- On way to work when WTC 1 struck.
- She was in the FAA Bldg when WTC-2 was hit.
- She heard about WTC 1 crash b/c her friend who worked next door to WTC called her on the cell phone.

- She saw WTC-2 crash on T.V.
- They started to account for Personnel on travel in Boston, etc.
- They have ~~an~~ an Administrative function so she had no idea of what had failed operationally.
- She learned of Pentagon Crash from watching T.V. news reports.
- She then ran to speak with Sola Kahlia (S/P?) (Senior Exec).
↳ she followed Kahlia to 10th Fl.
- She set up the "military cell" next to Griffith's office in the days that followed 9-11.
- She entered the Air Traffic Control room on 10th Fl. and went to Dave Canabos.
↓
Canabos and others were setting up or had set up a crisis room.

main issues:

fire and
medevacs
(not fighter A/C)

- The mission essential A/C had to get airborne while civilian A/C were cleared from the sky.
- She talked to Air Space People (Mr. Steve Nolte - an Air Space mgr - civilian) at CMOC.
- She used regular phones and (maybe the STU-3) to talk to CMOC at NORAD HQ.
- She did not participate in SVTS.
- She did not get involved with Aviation Crisis Center (ACC) on ~~at~~ 10th FL. on 9-11.
- She coordinated w/ Lt. Col. Michael Ann Cherry re: the release of military A/C like medevacs, fire and rescue, etc.
- (She) They were not involved in trying to sort out which A/C struck which bldgs.

- She does not remember specific report of A/C approaching D.C.
- She did not hear anything specific about UAL 93 before it crashed.
- She does not remember how she heard about UAL 93.
- She was not asked by Canales or others in AT Control room to help coordinate military response to attacks (i.e. coordinate scramble of fighter pilots).
- Pre 9-11 Understanding of hijack procedures:
 - ↳ Her knowledge is based on her work as a military air traffic controller.
 - ↳ She knows ATC can ask for military assistance.
- FAA Order 7610.4 - Special military assistance for hijack.

- Hyack response. Does not overlap with her duties.
- She was not plugged into the Operational Situational Awareness on 9-11.
- She does not believe she saw the "notifications to the military" list.
- ~~the~~ The FAA did not talk to her about the intercept reactions of military aircraft, ~~the ROE or~~
- The FAA ^{people} may have talked to her about ROE and use of FAA ATC ^{to vector fighter A/C} but maybe not ~~and~~ until after 9/11.
- No one asked her about AFIO on 9-11.
- She was involved in SCATANA issue on 9-11.
- Someone from FAA Administrator's ^{Probably Pete Challen - maybe mate Belzer.}

office asked her to talk to
Gen. Ederhart about the
Implementation order of SCATANA.

- on 9/11 - she worked little to no
Operational Issues.
- ~~At~~ She did not take notes of
events on 9-11.
- She went to 10th FL. on her own
accord. → not asked by Griffith
or anyone else to come to 10th FL.
- 10th FL. → major risk and Cond.
Vicker arrived at FAA HQ most
likely after 4 A/C Crashes on 9-11.
- Post 9-11 → Atkins' office
has a Contingency role.
- She ~~is~~ was interviewed by the NITRE
people.

Col Atkins 4/6/04

w MAS Duffin

ATC Officer
28 years

FAA AF md Ln
31 Aug 2000

Cdr of Det 2 AF Ln Det ATCS
32 AF

VP for ATM
at Bery

has an for CA

Mr
Blomzer

Mr
Mc
Callaghan

9/11 en route 1st building #2
on 4th floor when Pentagon

Sabra Halelani

Don w NORAD

AirSpace

AirSpace

Mr

Steve Nott

Mgr

Mayor New came in

~~Andrew~~
~~ROE~~
~~DAVID~~
~~SCAFANA~~

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Federal Aviation Administration Headquarters, (FAA HQ)

Type of event: Interview with Colonel Cheryl Atkins

Date: Friday, March 26, 2004

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Geoffrey Brown

Team Number: 8

Location: 10th Floor, FAA HQ, Washington, D.C.

Participants - Non-Commission: Major Matt Duffin, Department of Defense (DoD)

Legal Counsel

Participants - Commission: John Azzarello, Miles Kara, Kevin Shaeffer, Geoffrey Brown

Note: Please refer to the recorded interview for further details.

Background:

Atkins was a U.S. Air Force Air Traffic Controller (ATC) for approximately twenty-four years. She has been a Military Liaison with the FAA since August 31, 2000; immediately prior to that she worked as the Deputy Director for Management Reform in the Undersecretary of the Air Force's office.

On September 11, 2001 (9/11) she was Commander of Detachment Two (the military liaison office at FAA Headquarters).

Atkins explained that each service's liaison reports independently to their chain of command. The Air Force liaisons at the FAA Regions all report to her. Atkins reports to the Pentagon, and is associated with the offices of Bill Peacock for administrative support. Her department offices are in a suite on the fourth floor at FAA Headquarters.

Atkins views the Central Altitude Reservation Function (CARF) at FAA Herndon Command Center as "just another customer", whereas she views the Air Services Cell as both "customers" and "teammates" because they report to the Associate Director for Civil Aviation for the Air Force. McCullough is the current Associate Director, and Mr. Plenser, currently Vice President of Air Traffic Management for Boeing, was in the position on 9/11.

9/11:

Atkins was in route to work when the first flight struck the World Trade Center (WTC) [American Airline Flight 11 (AAL 11) at 8:46AM (approx.)]. She was in FAA Headquarters when the second plane hit the WTC [United Airlines Flight 175 (UAL 175)]

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at 9:03 (approx.)), and saw the event on a CNN broadcast. Immediately they began personnel accounting. She believes originally she heard on the broadcast that a bomb had gone off at the Pentagon. She went to the tenth floor with Sabra Caleia shortly after American Airlines Flight 77 (AAL 77) struck the Pentagon [9:37 (approx.)].

Atkins went to the Air Traffic Situation Room where David Cannoles was working on a teleconference. She was the only military liaison in the room at that time. She was "in and out" of this room throughout the morning, but did not hear any information that related to United Airlines Flight 93 (UAL 93). She did not speak with any of the military representatives at the White House, and was not informed of a threat to Air Force One.

She recalls one of the main issues being addressed was "mission essential aircraft" that needed identification and permission to travel. She worked directly with Steve Nolte, the Air Space Manager at NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command), to coordinate this. Mission essential aircraft would entail medical evacuation, fire and rescue aircraft. She also spoke with Lt. Col. Michael-Ann Cherry at FAA Herndon Command Center to exchange information. Atkins performed these duties from commercial lines, but did use STU3 phones occasionally. Atkins believes either on 9/11 and or in the days following Temporary Flight Orders (TFO) were issued and a coordinating military cell was established at the FAA.

She did not participate in the Tactical Net set by Lee Longmire, and did not participate in the SVT (Secure Video Teleconference).

Pre-9/11 hijack protocol, military notification, and the response to the attacks:

Atkins' exposure to hijack protocols is the guidance given within the FAA Air Traffic Procedures handbook, which is also used by military ATCs. She does not know who the FAA military hijack coordinator was, but she informed Commission staff that her responsibilities do not overlap with this issue.

Atkins explained that her office is a liaison military administrative office, and she does not see notification to her of the hijack as procedural military notification. She noted that no one at the FAA told her on 9/11 that she should set in motion notification for a military response and/or coordination with the FAA response to the attacks.

Commission staff represented to Atkins that there is no indication in the FAA handbook for special military procedures that her office has a role in the notification to the military of a hijack, or the request to the military for fighter asset support. She confirmed this assessment.

She was involved with military administrative coordinating and facilitating on 9/11 and not with direct assessment or response to the attacks.

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Commission staff presented the FAA timeline of military notifications, and Atkins commented that she has never been exposed to the document. She did not work with Darlene Freeman, Dan Diggins or David Cannoles to produce that project.

Atkins had no role in fighter activity, ROE (Rules of Engagement), DEFCON (Defensive Condition), or AFIO (Authorization for Intercept Operations) on 9/11.

Major Nix and Commander Victor, liaisons for other military services, came to the tenth floor on 9/11 after they arrived from Crystal City. They arrived later in the morning since they had to walk from Crystal City through the police and military presence that was responding to the impact at the Pentagon.

SCATANA:

A representative from the Administrator's office area, either Monte Belger or Pete Challan, and most likely Challan to Atkins' recollection, asked her to receive clarification from General Ralph Eberhart (Command in Chief, or CINC, NORAD) on SCATANA procedures. She called Eberhart, and asked her about the implementation order. Eberhart referred her to his O-6, and he informed her that the implementation order was for "Air Security".

Post 9/11 reconstruction:

Atkins commented that she did not take any notes on 9/11, and if she was asked to comment on her recollection of events as pertained to the tactical level, she could only offer "what I saw in the papers" (media reports). She did view a number of 9/11 presentations, but she has no specific knowledge of these briefings, or of any issues prior to the Commission's creation that involve a debate regarding FAA notification to the military of the hijacking events. Since Commission staff began its interviews, Atkins has heard that many of the FAA logs and military logs of events during the attacks do not represent matching information. David Cannoles did not speak with her on this issue.

She was part of the discussions between General Arnold and Jeff Griffith, put for the most part she provided assistance to Arnold by explaining the administrative function of "bringing the air space back up" so he could have a general knowledge of the role of the military officers who work with the FAA, and how that re-establishing of the airspace system was conducted.

She participated in lessons learned interviews for Operation Enduring Look. She was also interviewed by Meiter consultants for their FAA post-9/11 lessons learned report. She does not recall specifics from these interviews.

Atkins recalls that the FAA did review immediately after 9/11 the tactical details and normal process policies (phone numbers, titles, etc.) involved in military notification. On the military side, Atkins commented that NORAD was the lead on reviewing these details.

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